

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-06

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R 071130Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

SECSTATE WASHDC 9658

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 4154

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, PFOR, GW, CB, US

SUBJ: EVACUATION OF FRG PERSONNEL FROM PHNOM PENH

REF: A. BONN 3766 (NOTAL)

B. STATE 51224 (NOTAL)

1. HEAD OF FRG INTERESTS SECTION PHNOM PENH VOLLERS CALLED ON DCM AFTERNOON MARCH 7 TO DISCUSS INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BONN (REFTEL A). VOLLERS EXPLAINED THE INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED PRECISELY AS THEY ARE PRESENTED IN REFTEL A. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN LEFT SOME DISCRETION IN THAT HE COULD RESPOND TO BONN WITH SERIOUS OBJECTIONS TO THE INSTRUCTION THAT HE MOVE HIMSELF AND HEILANDT TO BANGKOK. HE SAID HE HAD SUCH SERIOUS OBJECTIONS BUT HE WAS SOMEWHAT RELUCTANT TO PRESENT THEM TO BONN, IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT HIS PREDECESSOR, VON MARSCHALL, HAD DISAGREED WITH BERENDONCK IN 1973 OVER THE SAME ISSUE. IN THAT CASE IT HAD BECOME A SUBJECT OF PUBLIC CONTROVERSY IN GERMANY WITH VON MARSCHALL EMERGING AS THE HEROIC DIPLOMAT WILLING TO
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STAY IN PHNOM PENH UNDER FIRE, AND BERENDONCK THE SKIT-

TISH BUREAUCRAT AT HOME WHO HAD BEEN PROVED WRONG BY THE FAILURE OF PHNOM PENH TO FALL TO THE KC. VOLLERS NOTED THAT IT IS NOT NICE TO FIND ONE SELF IN THE SITUATION OF THE SUBORDINATE OFFICIAL WHO HAS PROVED HIS SUPERIOR WRONG ON AN ISSUE, ESPECIALLY ONE THAT BECOMES PUBLIC.

2. VOLLERS ASKED DCM TO GIVE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE NEED FOR EVACUATION AT THIS TIME. DCM'S RESPONSE WAS THAT THE MILITARY SITUATION DID NOT APPEAR TO BE CRITICAL. A GREAT DEAL WOULD DEPEND ON THE STAYING POWER AND THE MORALE OF THE KHMERS, WHICH IN TURN WOULD DEPEND A GOOD DEAL ON THE OUTCOME IN THE U.S. CONGRESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE. DCM STATED THAT U.S. EMBASSY PHNOM PENH HAS NOT CHANGED ITS EVACUATION POSTURE, WHICH AT PRESENT IS TO TRY TO REDUCE TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE FOR WHOSE EVACUATION WE ARE RESPONSIBLE, BUT THAT ALL OF OUR EMPLOYEES ARE STAYING HERE ON THE JOB AND WE HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS TO REDUCE OFFICIAL STAFF. DCM ASSURED VOLLERS THAT HE AND HEILANDT ARE INCLUDED IN OUR EVACUATION PLANNING AND THAT THEY COULD COUNT ON GOING OUT WITH US IF IT EVER BECAME NECESSARY.

3. VOLLERS THEN SAID THAT HE BELIEVED HE WOULD OBJECT TO THE INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BONN SINCE HIS OWN ANALYSIS OF THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE NEED FOR EVACUATION COINCIDED EXACTLY WITH OURS. HE ATTRIBUTED THE INSTRUCTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM BONN TO THE ALARMIST AND PESSIMISTIC REPORTING BEING DONE BY THE GERMAN TV TEAM WHICH IS NOW IN PHNOM PENH. HE ASKED, HOWEVER, WHETHER WE COULD FIND SPACE FOR HIM AND HEILANDT ON OUR USAID FLIGHT TO BANGKOK NEXT WEEK SHOULD HE BE ORDERED TO EVACUATE DESPITE THE OBJECTIONS HE INTENDS TO EXPRESS TO BONN. DCM ASSURED HIM WE COULD FIND SPACE ON ONE FLIGHT OR ANOTHER NEXT WEEK. VOLLERS' ONLY OTHER CONCERN WAS WHAT TO DO WITH A SMALL QUANTITY OF FILES THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO DESTROY IF HE HAD TO LEAVE PHNOM PENH SINCE HE WOULD WANT TO BRING THESE FILES BACK HERE WITH HIM IF HE RETURNED LATER. DCM SUGGESTED HE TAKE THESE FILES WITH HIM AS BAGGAGE IF HE GOES TO

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BANGKOK NEXT WEEK.

4. VOLLERS SHOULD BE PROTECTED AND ABOVE CONVERSATION HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE IF THERE ARE ANY FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH FRG OFFICIALS ON THIS SUBJECT. THE ONE THING VOLLERS WISHES TO AVOID IS A PERSONAL CLASH PUBLIC OR PRIVATE WITH BERENDONCK IN THE MANNER OF VON MARSCHALL'S OF 1973. IN OUR OPINION VOLLERS IS

MAKING THE CORRECT DECISION. WE PROMISED TO KEEP IN
CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM AND TO ADVISE HIM IF THERE IS ANY
SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN THE SECURITY SITUATION OR IN
OUR OWN EVACUATION PLANNING.
DEAN

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